

Message Text

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72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 T-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-14 USIA-12 RSR-01 /124 W
----- 033141

R 091438 Z MAR 73

FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1832

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0163

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E. O. 11652: DECLAS 12/31/74

TAGS: PINS MZ

SUBJ: NEWSMEN REPORT DETAILS GAGO COUTINHO ATTACK

REF: LOURENCO MARQUES 153

1. FOLLOWING ATTACK ON GAGO COUTINHO OUTPOST REPORTED REFTEL, PORTUGUESE HASTENED TO FLY LOCAL NEWSMEN TO SITE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT VILLAGE WAS STILL THERE, AND RESULTANT STORIES (INCLUDING NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHS) APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS MARCH 9.

2. ACCOUNTS CONTRIBUTE ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF UNSUCCESSFUL RAID. GAGO COUTINHO IS SEAT OF ADMINISTRATIVE POST OF CHOFUMBO RPT CHOFUMBO, LOCATED SOME FIVE KMS. FROM ZAMBIAN BORDER, AND CONSISTS OF RESIDENCE/ OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR, SCHOOL AND HEALTH (FIRST AID) POST, SOCIAL CENTER, AND ALDEAMENTO OF ABOUT 750 AFRICANS. THERE IS SMALL GARRISON IN PREFABRICATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BARRACKS, AND A LANDING STRIP. ACCORDING TO PRESS, SETTLEMENT WAS ATTACKED BY ESTIMATED 240 GUERRILLAS, ORGANIZED IN THREE

LINES OF COMBAT AND ARMED AS REPORTED REFTEL, AND BRINGING WITH THEM FRELIMO FLAG AND MOVIE CAMERA OPERATOR TO FILM ANTICIPATED "CAPTURE" OF POST. IN COURSE OF ATTACK, MORTAR GRENADE BLASTED HOLE IN ROOF OF ONE BARRACKS, RECOILLESS CANNON MISSILE SMASHED WALL OF HEALTH POST, AND BULLETS BROKE WINDOWS AND POCKMARKED WALLS, THERE WERE SOME NEAR MISSES WITH ROCKETS, AND ONE GRENADE EXPLODED OVER A SHELTER, WOUNDING SEVEN SOLDIERS (ALL OF WHOM SURVIVED). NO CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. WHEN PUT TO FLIGHT, FRELIMO UNIT APPARENTLY RETREATED INTO ZAMBIA, LEAVING BEHIND TWO DEAD, TRACES OF SOME 30 WOUNDED, MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT, THEIR FLAG, AND SOVIET FILMS.

3. COMMENT: PORTUGUESE OBVIOUSLY ANXIOUS FORESTALL ANY IMAGINATIVE FRELIMO ACCOUNT OF ATTACK, SUCH AS THAT WHICH FOLLOWED ROCKET ATTACK ON TETE, BY GETTING REPORTERS TO SCENE FAST AND RELEASING DETAILS AND PHOTOS. THIS MAJOR FRELIMO EFFORT ACHIEVE PROPAGANDA COUP (WHICH WOULD HAVE HAD LITTLE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE EVEN IF SUCCESSFUL) SUGGESTS IT FEELS URGENT NEED TO PRODUCE " VICTORY" FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSUMPTION. SEEMS NOT IMPROBABLE THAT IT WILL TRY AGAIN, SOMEWHERE. VAN OSS

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DAR ES SALAAM
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